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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Soviet pressure campaign in Germany

Since September 1951, the Soviet Union has engaged in a steady campaign of diplomatic notes, unity propaganda, pressure tactics and peace treaty proposals aimed at preventing West German rearmament and integration into the European Defense Community. In recent weeks, the USSR has intensified this campaign of intimidation, of which the most ominous feature was the Ulbricht warning of dire consequences to Berlin in the event of West German signature of the Western agreements. At the same time, Allied vehicles proceeding to and from Berlin have been detained, and the US has been accused of instigating border violations.

The Soviet program of intimidation is calculated to aggravate disunity in the Allied camp and bring about four-power discussions on Germany which could be used to slow or block Western defense plans. The lengths to which Moscow carries the program, however, will depend upon its assessment of how much force it can employ to prevent West German integration without provoking strong Western counteraction. There are no indications that the USSR is prepared to risk war over the current Western effort to integrate West Germany into the EDC.

Further harassment in Berlin and Austria, a stepped-up protest campaign through Communist-inspired mass demonstrations not confined to Germany, and the formal establishment of an East German army would be logical reactions to the further development of Western defense plans.

Soviet possibilities for harassment in Berlin short of complete blockade include closing any or all of the ten road and five rail crossing points, stopping barge traffic, raising the highway tax and interfering with West Berlin's municipal transportation system. West Berlin, however, is in a much better position to face blockade than in 1948 because its stocks are greater and its electricity and gas systems are now independent of producing units in the Soviet sector.

The Communist threat is underlined by the improvement in the Soviet capability for reimposing a Berlin land blockade on the pattern of the 1948 effort. The Soviet authorities in Berlin have undertaken to improve the rail and water net around the city, to minimize the opportunities for Western retaliation, and to expedite through traffic by avoiding the central Berlin rail and canal hub. The canal by-pass will not be in full operation until late summer.

The boomerang effect of the 1948 blockade, however, would argue against the likelihood of another Russian attempt at total blockade. While Western capabilities for economic retaliation against the Soviet Zone have been reduced, the probability is that a blockade would give new impetus to Western unity. If unsuccessful, it would enhance US prestige.

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There is no doubt that by an all-out effort the Russians could impose a total blockade. The maneuver areas in which the occupying forces are now dispersed for summer training dominate the Western road, rail and canal arteries to Berlin, and the air corridors could be blanketed at a moment's notice by the Soviet MIG-15 force from its present operational bases (see map).

An effective blockade, however, could be undertaken only if the Soviet Union were willing to risk war by closing the air corridors, and there is no indication that it is prepared to take that step. Once the split of Germany appears definitive in Soviet eyes, stronger harassing measures short of total blockade may be taken in the hope of eventually forcing the West out of Berlin.

The repeated warnings by East German leaders that signature of the contractual agreement would necessitate an armed force for "defense of the homeland" is a part of the Soviet pressure campaign. The East German paramilitary forces, especially the land force, or Alert Police, may well be unveiled as a national military force and expanded to equality with the proposed West German forces. While a military force of considerable size would strain the East German economy, the necessity to counter a West German army is likely to override the adverse economic considerations.

There are reports that a defense ministry is being established within the Ministry of Interior. It has been estimated that the Alert Police could be expanded from its present size of 52,000 men to 150,000 within six months. It already possesses an oversized officer corps of 14,000 to 16,000, and its 24 component units are, in effect, cadre divisions.

Recruiting for the Alert Police reportedly will be carried out by local administration under the control of the Socialist Unity Party, rather than by commanders of the tactical units as in the past. This transfer of functions is considered a logical preparatory step for the introduction of conscription. Morale in the Alert Police has been notoriously low, however, and any recruiting or conscription program would probably meet serious problems.

In West Germany the Communists, especially through their youth organizations, may attempt to provoke violent incidents similar to that of 11 May in Essen. The Communist Party, however, is unable to mount any major sustained strikes, since the influential non-Communist Federation of Trade Unions has adopted a neutral attitude in regard to the contractual agreements and the European Defense Community.

The Kremlin could attempt to prevent ratification of the Allied agreements by offering attractive concessions on the German unity question. Its "democratization" program in the Soviet Zone suggests possible preparation for at least a token effort in this direction. The Socialist Unity Party (SED) has recently conducted its first

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party elections using the secret ballot, penal reforms have been instituted, and favorable consideration for positions of responsibility is allegedly being given non-SED members. In addition, the USSR has returned 66 important industrial combines to the East German Government, although it surely retains sub rosa control.

Inability of the USSR to meet Western conditions or give up what it already controls makes any real concession unlikely. Even though the Soviet Union has proclaimed its support of free all-German elections and agreed in principle to an investigation of electoral conditions, it still insists that a united Germany be denied the right to join Western defense organizations, and it is not prepared to accept UN electoral inspection.

If the Soviet intimidation tactics fail, and West Germany becomes a part of the European Community, it is possible that the USSR will then give East Germany a separate treaty and formal status within the Orbit, thus according it a political status corresponding to its growing economic and military importance.

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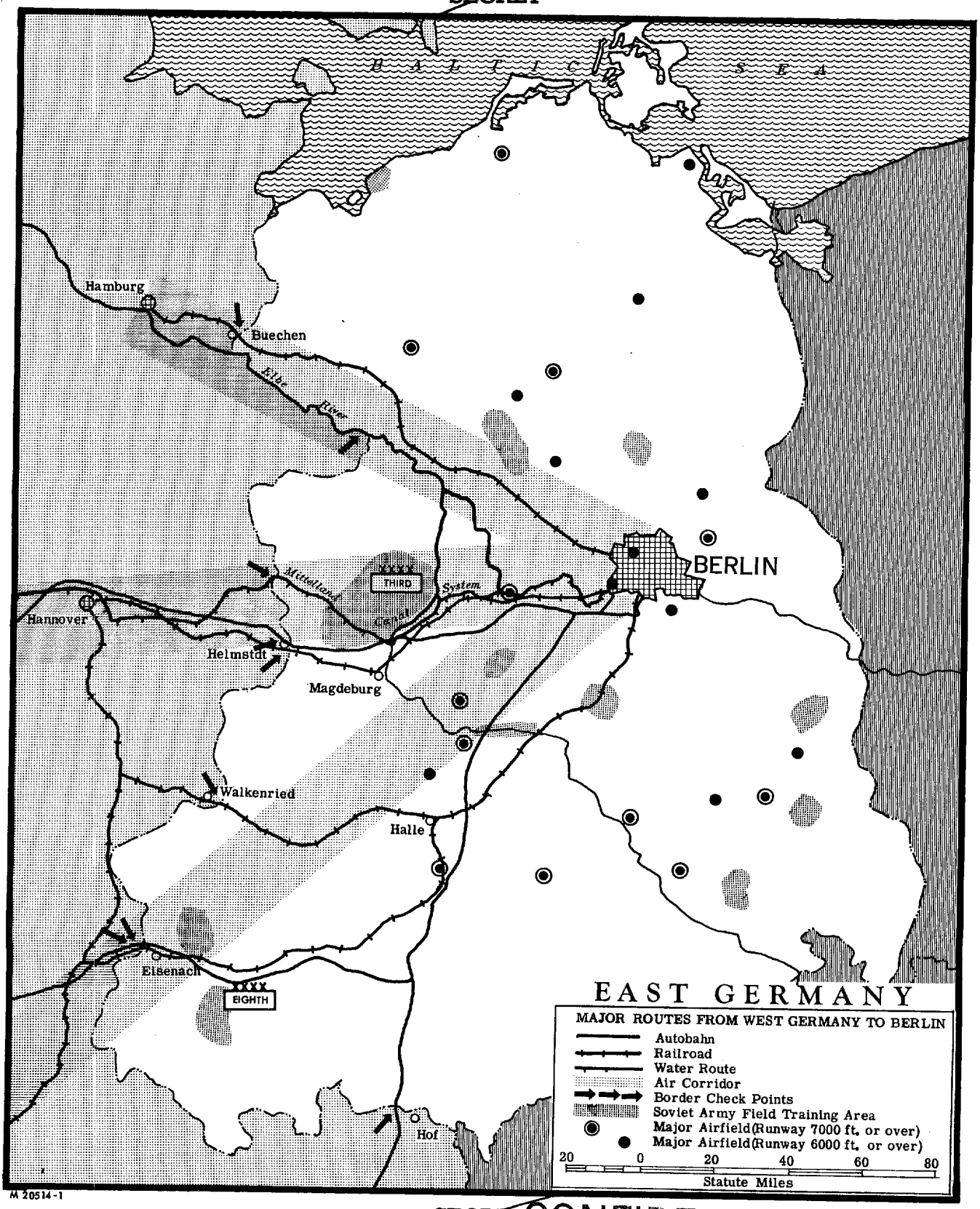

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